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JOHN CENNICK.

A SKETCH.

BY

Rev. J. E. HUTTON, M.A.,

Author of "A Short History of the Moravian Church."

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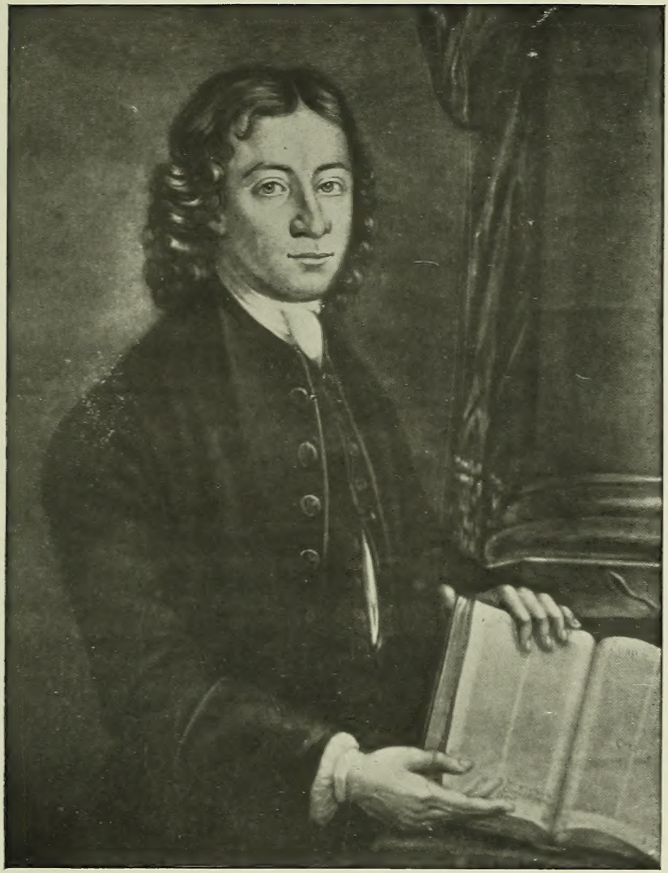

JOHN CENNICK.

(From a Block supplied by the Moravian Mission Agency).

PREFACE.

The chief sources used in the preparation of this brief sketch of Cennick's life are the following:—(1) Cennick's Diary, printed in the Moravian Messenger for 1874, 1875, 1876; (2) Notices of the labours of Rev. John Cennick, Fraternal Record, 1858 and 1859. (3) Cennick's Letters to James Hutton, in MS. only; copied by the late Bishop A. C. Hassè. (4) Extracts by the same hand from the London Congregation Diary, and Dublin and Gracehill Conference Minutes. (5) Cennick's Diary of his Visit to Germany, MS. only; copy by A. C. Hassè. (6) Cennick's Village Discourses, edited with introductory memoir by Matthew Wilkes, also a brief autobiography. (7) A. C. Hassè's MS. list of Cennick's Discourses and Works. The standard histories of Lecky, Overton, and Abel Stevens, and the biographies of John and Charles Wesley, have, of course, been consulted.

I have several friends to thank for kind assistance:—The Rev. L. G. Hassè for a valuable Bibliography; Rev. E. R. Hassè for loan of books; Mr. John England for his own sketches, and the members of the Moravian Governing Board for the loan of valuable material from the Provincial Archives.

This sketch of Cennick does not of course pretend to be complete. I trust, however, that enough has been told to give a sympathetic picture of the man and some conception of the part which he played in the great Evangelical Revival.

All profits resulting from the sale of this booklet are to be devoted to the "Cennick Memorial Church," Bath.

CHAPTER I.

THE SEEKER.

As the Bohemian Protestants fled before the blast in the days when the Thirty Years' War was raging, it befell, says the story, that one of the refugees set sail across the silver streak, and settling down in the land of the free-born, became the founder of a new family on British soil. It is said that the family name was Kunik, altered later to Cennick. If this be true, the hero of our story had a dash of martyr blood in his veins. John Cennick was born at Reading, on December 12th, 1718; and three days later the child was baptized in St. Lawrence Church, which stands to this day beside the Municipal Buildings.[1] For two generations the Cennick family had been of the Quaker persuasion; and in those days the godly Quakers were a mocked and persecuted people. His grand-parents had suffered for their faith, and had lain in Reading gaol; and his grandmother had there made halfpenny laces for her living; but his father had afterwards joined the Church of England, and Cennick himself was nursed in the Anglican fold. Years later, when debating with a Presbyterian in the north of Ireland, he declared his conviction that episcopal government was of Divine authority. "I am an episcopalian every inch of me," he said, "and every drop of blood in me is episcopalian."

He was brought up as strait as a Pharisee, and objected very much to the process. He says that his mother made him go to St. Lawrence Church every morn-

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1. The entry in the register is as follows:—"Dec. 4th, 1718, John, S. of George and Anna Cennick." We must, however, add eleven days to fit this with the new style of reckoning, which commenced on Sep. 14th, 1752.

ing and evening in the week. But of all the days in all the week he hated Sunday the most. To Cennick the Day of Rest was a Day of Torment. "My mother," he says, "would not suffer me to play on the Lord's Day, but confined me to read or say hymns all day long with my sisters. This I then counted the worst of bondage and indeed cruelty. I envied other children who were not restrained as I was, and hoped, as I grew up, to get their liberty."

He appears, on the whole, to have been a lad of healthy instincts and tastes. He was fond of play, fond of fine clothes, and fond of praise; but afraid to swear or to take God's name in vain. He says also that he had an obstinate temper, and that his lips were full of lies continually; but that always when he had done anything very wrong, he commonly dreaded to go to bed, lest he should drop into hell before morning. The lad was serious beyond his years. He never went to bed without saying his prayers, and promising God how good he would be next day; and often, in moments of bitter repentance, after telling lies or breaking the Sabbath, he pondered on the grim text: "The eye that mocketh at his father, and despiseth to obey his mother, the ravens of the valley shall pick it out and the young eagles shall eat it."[1]

He was early schooled for the task that lay before him. What a scene that was when he paid a visit to his aged aunt upon her death-bed! What a deep impression the solemn event made upon his tender conscience! As the little fellow entered the death-chamber, he heard the old lady saying to her maid, "Mary, I have something to say

1. Proverbs xxx., 17.

to you! It may be you may think it a lie, but indeed it is truth. This night the Lord stood by me, and invited me to drink of the fountain of life freely; and I shall stand before the Lord bold as a lion." For a while the little chap stood awe-struck; his blood seemed chilled in his veins; and there and then he began to pray that before he died he, too, like his aunt, might know that he was going to heaven. But just then his mother entered, and, addressing the dying lady, said, "Poor soul."

At once the expiring saint replied, in tones of glad triumphant faith, "Who dares call me poor? I am rich in Christ! I have got Christ! I am rich."

From that solemn moment to the day of his conversion John Cennick often thought with tears of his aunt's dying words.

At the flighty age of fifteen, however, he kicked over the parental traces, and devoted himself to a life of frivolous jollity. The wild-oats fever lasted three or four years. He played cards. He sang comic songs. He went to horse-races. He saw "sights," though what sort of "sights" he does not tell us. He danced in ball-rooms. He talked about the heathen gods. He even read the diverting history of Alexander the Great! It may, of course, seem strange to us that a man with any common-sense at all should put the reading of ancient history on the same level as horse-racing. But in those days it was almost impossible to steer a steady, middle course between the Scylla of bigotry and the Charybdis of sensuality. For example, there was the great question of plays and play-going. If Cennick had only possessed money enough, he would, he says, have spent all his time at the theatre. But what did that mean? It meant feeding his

mind on the disgusting compositions of Congreve and Wycherley.

But the giddy life was too giddy to last. As Cennick was walking along Cheapside in London, where he had gone to seek his fortune, he was suddenly smitten by a sense of his guilt, or, to use his own expression, "the hand of the Lord touched me"; and now he sank from the height of mirth to the lowest depths of despair. During two or three years he now endured the agonies of religious depression. It was the old, old story over again. He had, like Bunyan and many another, to be beaten by the cudgel of Giant Despair before he could stand upon the Delectable Mountains. For some time he hovered between the extremes of Atheism and Popery; and, reading in a Romanist book of devotion about the sufferings of Christ, he conceived a desire to flee to France and there to enter the Church of Rome. Meanwhile he sank from gloom to greater gloom. He thought himself tottering on the brink of hell. At night he fancied he saw apparitions in the corners of his room, and was continually afraid of meeting the devil in the dark. In vain he tried every method of relief that his tortured soul could devise. In vain he prayed God to hide him in the grave, or at any rate to drive him mad, so that he would no longer be conscious of his misery. In vain he breathed the prayer of Hugo, found in a book called *Hugo's Emblems:*

> O Lord, my God, some kind relief afford,
> Grant some kind poison or some friendly sword;
> The mercy, death, is all I thee implore,
> O grant it soon, lest I blaspheme Thy power.

He longed to die, and yet he was afraid of death. "In such a state as I was in," he says, "I would not have

ventured to depart from this life for all the gold in Arabia." He had less hope for himself than for Judas Iscariot or Francis Spira, the Italian apostate.[1] As he stood at his bedroom window at midnight, every sight and sound in God's fair world of nature seemed to tell the same dismal tale. If he scanned the star-lit canopy of heaven, he said to himself, "Ah! I have no part there! The gate of that holy city is closed to every sinner." If he heard a watch-dog bark in the distance, he could only answer, "So God accounts of my prayers." If he heard the moping owl to the moon complain, he thought, "I am also become like an owl in the desert." He hated his own righteousness, loathed his own prayers, and sweated and quaked for terror.

In vain he tried the ascetic method of starving the body to purify the soul. During some months he never ate anything more tasty than dry bread, potatoes, acorns, the leaves of trees, crab-apples and even grass. He knelt and prayed nine times a day. He watched. He fasted. He gave money to the poor. He refrained from gross sins. He attended the Sacrament. He went to church twice a day. Yet the more he strove, the more he seemed to be led captive by the devil. His friends told him he needed medicine. He took some, but it did not heal his soul. At last his agony became so acute, that he fled from the company of his relatives and friends and sat him down in a lonely spot within sight of the mouldering walls of Reading Abbey.

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1. The terrible story of Francis Spira is now out of print. It seems to have been well known in Cennick's time.

Quite tired at last I sat me down
Some distance from my native town,
Yet within sight, near where the Thames,
Glides silent by in fruitful streams.

Sighs now no more would be confined;
They breathed the trouble of my mind.
I wished for death, and checked the word,
And prayed despairing for the Lord.

Close by the hill (my seat) there stood
The ruins of a noted wood:
Among whose trees, beneath whose shade,
The birds their habitation made.

While I was musing, nigh despair,
They sung, and I awhile gave ear.
Reflecting, midst their harmony,
How blest are every one but me!

The poor young fellow was all broken to pieces; and said to himself, "Surely I am a reprobate. God hath loved every man but me."

As Cennick was preaching, a few years after this, to some village folk at Little Sommerford in Wiltshire, he tried to explain, in his simple way, the cause of all this misery. It was all, he said, because he trusted in himself instead of trusting in Christ. "I did not," he said, "believe in Him for remission of my sins; for, to speak truly, I believed nothing more than a heathen or Turk. My heart had no real benefit from His death or blood-shedding, more than a serious Jew; nothing that could make me happy or deliver me from the fear of death or the power of sin. My nature remained the same, only I washed and made clean the outside of the cup and platter. I garnished the tomb and whited the wall, but within I felt the old stainings, the same bad tempers and ill affections."

September 1737.—At last, however, Cennick met the angel of deliverance in the very spot which in earlier days he had so much detested: not in the lonely fields, but within the walls of St. Lawrence Church. For some weeks he had been making private arrangements to flee from home to some solitary spot; and then, as he sat, one memorable day, maturing his plans, he heard the old familiar bell ring once again to prayers. "What does it matter," said he to himself, "if I go to church to-day or not? to-morrow I shall be miles away from here." He would go, for decency's sake. If he stayed at home he might get a bad character. He entered the church, fell down on his knees, and began to murmur, as often before, because his cross seemed heavier than ever was laid on any one beside. He thought how untroubled all the children of God would wing their way to heaven, and how full of terror he himself must go down to hell. "I was," he says, "as if the sword of the Lord was dividing asunder my joints and marrow, my soul and spirit: till near the end of the Psalms, when these words were read: 'Great are the troubles of the righteous, but the Lord delivereth him out of them all: And all they that put their trust in Him shall not be destitute.'[1] I had just room to think, who can be more destitute than I, when I was overwhelmed with joy, and I believed there was mercy. My heart danced for joy and my dying soul revived. I heard the voice of Jesus saying, "I am Thy salvation." I no more groaned under the weight of sin. The fears of hell were taken away, and being sensible that Christ loved me and died for me, I rejoiced in God my Saviour."

He had touched the hem of the garment, and went out into the sunshine.

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1. Ps. xxxiv., 19, 22. P. B. Version

CHAPTER II.

KINGSWOOD. 1739-40.

And now the way was speedily opened for Cennick's public career as a preacher. As he sat in the house of a friend one evening, it so happened that the people asked him to take a hand at cards; and when Cennick politely refused, believing that cards at best were a waste of time, a young fellow from Oxford, who was present in the company, remark with a sneer: "There is just such a stupid religious fellow in Oxford: one Kinchin, whose brother is of our college, and was once as foolish as he, but is much otherwise now." To Cennick this was like a glad message from heaven. No longer did he feel like a pelican in the wilderness. There was somebody else in the world like himself. He was so excited that he forgot the man's name, but the man himself he must find at all costs. Away he trudged, one rainy Monday morning, to hunt him up in Oxford. As he came within sight of the historic city, misgivings clutched at his heart. What madman's errand was this whereon he was bent? "What am I going for?" said he to himself. "To seek an unknown person, not knowing his name or his college? What would the world say if they knew my errand?" He was wet to the skin, cold, and miserable. There, at the brow of the hill, he stood, the towers of Oxford faintly shewing three miles away in the plain below; and there he prayed, saying, "O Lord God of Israel, who didst direct the servant of Abraham to find a wife for his master Isaac, when he sought her in a strange country, direct me, I pray Thee, that I may find out this man; and make my way prosperous to Thy glory, and let his heart be open to speak

kindly to me for Thy sake." Thus, strengthened in the inner man, he pushed on into Oxford. He spent that night in a miserable lodging; was busy all Tuesday seeking his unknown Jonathan; and found him at last on Wednesday morning going out of his room to breakfast.

Cennick asked him if his name was Kinchin.

"Yes," replied the gownsman.

"Sir," faltered Cennick, "I hear you are despised on the same account with me, and should be glad to speak with you a quarter of an hour."

They talked together, prayed together, and went out together to breakfast. Never had Cennick spent such a happy morning. As he talked to his friend, he made a strange discovery. He found that Kinchin belonged to that company of seekers after God known to history as the Oxford Methodists. And now events moved thick and fast. He made the acquaintance of both the Wesleys; he had already read Whitefield's Journal, and longed to know the writer; he met him at James Hutton's house in London, fell on his neck and kissed him. It is clear what all this means. It means that Cennick was to play his part in the great Evangelical Revival. As he pondered on the purpose of his life in the quiet old days at Reading, he had sometimes heard a still, small voice which said, "Thou shalt bear My name before much people. Thou shalt bear My gospel even in the midst of the streets." The promised hour had struck at last, the freshening breeze was blowing. Already the fleet had put out to sea, and Cennick's bark was borne along upon the flowing tide. Already Methodist Societies were forming; and Whitefield, down in grimy Kingswood, was preaching to the colliers those wonderful

sermons in the open air which caused the tears to make white gutters down their blackened cheeks. At Kingswood, too, began Cennick's own career. There Whitefield had laid the foundation-stone of a charity-school for the children of colliers; there John Wesley had bought the site and put up the building; and now he offered Cennick the post of head-master. He authorised him further to visit the sick, and to expound the Scriptures in public. But Cennick did not confine himself long to teaching. At one of the open-air services for colliers, held under an historic sycamore-tree, the appointed preacher, Sammy Nathen, was late. The people asked Cennick to take his place. For some moments Cennick wavered. He was being asked to take a dangerous step. The arrival of Sammy himself brought no relief. Instead of preaching, he joined with the others in begging Cennick to preach. If ever there was need of Divine guidance, it was now. The critical moment of Cennick's life had come. To preach or not to preach, that was the question. In one way only could that question be answered. He retired, with two or three friends, to a cottage: knelt down in prayer: consulted the Lot: drew the encouraging words, "To respond"; and then, though with fear and trembling, preached his first sermon to the colliers. (June, 1739). For eighteen months he now acted as Wesley's lay-assistant. He took sweet counsel with the great evangelist, and loved him as a friend. He was now for all intents and purposes, a Wesleyan Methodist himself. He was welcomed, not only in Kingswood and Bristol, but in many surrounding villages. He felt that a glorious Gospel day was dawning. He preached in the Methodist sensational style, with Methodist fire and zeal. He settled down among the Kingswood colliers, who came

to hear him in thousands. It was here that he preached his powerful sermon on "The Cries of the Son of God." As Cennick depicted the awful sufferings of Christ upon the cross, the hardened sinners shed tears of penitence and joy. Yet the work at this time was not above criticism. As long as Cennick was yoked with Wesley, he had to witness some terrible scenes. "I have," he says, "seen people so foam and violently agitated that six men could not hold one, but he would spring out of their arms or off the ground, and tear himself as in hellish agonies. Others I have seen sweat enormously, and their necks and tongues swell and twist out of all shape. Some prophesied, and some uttered the worst of blasphemies against our Saviour." If something of this sort did not happen, John Wesley was quite disappointed, and would pray, saying, "Lord, where are Thy tokens and signs?" But Cennick hardly knew what to make of such exhibitions. Instead of regarding them as signal proofs of the presence of the Holy Ghost, he was rather inclined to attribute them to the machinations of the devil. Yet his own preaching now produced the same results as Wesley's. At one service in the school-room, where he preached on the forgiveness of sins, the uproar became a perfect babel. For three hours the place seemed to Cennick himself the very habitation of lost spirits. One woman said her name was Satan, another Beelzebub, a third Legion. It was a wild October night, black as pitch. As the wind was howling, the lightning flashing, the thunder roaring, and the rain plunging down in torrents, the poor folk, long lost in nameless vice, cried out in frenzied terror. No longer could they keep their seats; but, up and down, in wild confusion, they ran bawling and raving.

"The devil will have me!" shrieked one. "I am his servant. I am damned."

"My sins can never be pardoned," cried another. "I am gone, gone for ever."

"That fearful thunder," moaned a third, "is raised by the devil: in this storm he will bear me to hell."

It seemed, indeed, to Cennick himself as though the devil had taken possession of the people. Among the crowd was a young man called Sommers who raged so furiously that seven or eight persons could hardly hold him down. He roared, says Cennick, like a dragon.

"Ten thousand devils!" he yelled in his anguish; "millions, millions of devils are about me."

John Cennick had his own explanation of the scene. It was nothing less than the spirit of rebellion contending with the Spirit of God. "Bring Mr. Cennick! Bring Mr. Cennick!" the convicted sinners moaned with hollow voices. In spite of the confusion, he did his best to speak with such as desired his counsel. For some time his own life seemed to be in danger. With glaring eyes and swollen faces, the people spurned him with their strength, ground their teeth in fearful fury, and longed to tear him in pieces. Yet Cennick was no more afraid than Daniel in the den of lions. "What a power," he wrote to Wesley, "reigned among us." He felt that God was on his side.

But now events in the Kingswood Society took a curious turn. As John Wesley and John Cennick toiled hand in hand for the redemption of the Kingswood colliers, they discovered ere long that they could not agree on certain points of doctrine. There were three points in dispute! John Wesley was a thoroughgoing Arminian; John

Cennick was at least half-a-Calvinist. Wesley taught the doctrine of Christian Perfection: Cennick could believe in no such fiction. Wesley believed in convulsions, groanings, sweats, and fits as signs of conversion: Cennick looked on such things with suspicion and alarm. And each regarded the other's position with horror. The result was inevitable. As Cennick was convinced that Wesley's doctrines of free-will and perfection were not only unscriptural but dangerous, he felt it his duty to denounce those doctrines in his sermons. He denounced, in particular, the doctrine of Perfection. As preached by Wesley himself it was noble; as preached by his followers it was absurd. The Perfectionists were claiming to be as holy as God. "I," said one of them, Mr. Nowers, "am the sinless perfect man." He thought it no robbery to be equal with God. He never committed any sins, and never prayed for forgiveness! Such blasphemies filled Cennick with horror!

"I sit," he wrote to Whitefield, "solitary, like Eli, waiting what will become of the ark; and while I wail and fear the carrying of it away from among my people, my trouble increases daily. How glorious did the Gospel seem once to flourish in Kingswood! I spake of the everlasting love of Christ with sweet power. But now brother Charles is suffered to open his mouth against this truth, while the frightened sheep gaze and fly, as if no shepherd was among them. It is just as if Satan was now making war with the saints in a more than common way. O pray for the distressed lambs yet left in this place that they faint not! Surely they would if preaching would do it, for they have nothing whereon to rest, who now attend on the sermons, but their own faithfulness. With universal redemption brother Charles pleases the crowd. Brother

John follows him in everything. I believe no Atheist can more preach against predestination than they; and all who believe election are counted enemies to God and called so. Fly, dear brother! I am as alone! I am in the midst of the plague! If God give thee leave, make haste."

Meanwhile Charles Wesley, who was now in Kingswood, was telling the other side of the tale. "I prayed Christ our Teacher," he wrote, probably to his brother John, "to enlighten the people and me; and began my discourse with fear and trembling. The Spirit gave me utterance. I calmly warned them against apostasy, and spoke with great tenderness and caution. But who can stand before envy, bigotry, and predestination? The strong ones were offended. The poison of Calvin has drunk up their spirit of love. Ann Ayling and Ann Davis could not refrain from railing. John Cennick never offered to stop them."

He would have been a bold man if he had tried. It takes some courage for a young man of twenty-two to stop the "railing" of two excited ladies.

"Alas!" continues brother Charles, "we have set the wolf to keep the sheep. God gave me great moderation towards him who for many months has been undermining our doctrine and authority."

As soon, therefore, as John Wesley heard that Cennick and Charles had fallen out, he came down to Kingswood in a state of horror and indignation. From the point of view of courtesy and honour, the two disputants were on the same level. Each had preached against the other in public; each had written against the other in private; and each, from the most exalted motives, had denounced the other as an enemy of the faith. But that was not how

John Wesley regarded the matter. He had managed somehow to get hold of a copy of Cennick's letter to Whitefield, and flaunting the letter in Cennick's face before the whole Society, he accused the young preacher of treachery. "My brethren," said Wesley, shewing the letter, "judge."

The scene was dramatic and thrilling! In vain Cennick protested there was nothing in the letter which he felt called upon to retract. For a week there was a lull in the storm; and then John Wesley shot his bolt. He had come to Kingswood with one purpose only. He had come to assert his own authority in the Society which he himself had established. He had come to stamp out, once and for all, what seemed to him the insidious poison of Calvinistic doctrine. He had come to rescue the lambs of the fold from the devouring wolf, John Cennick. He had come to expel that disturber of the peace, or else reduce him to submission. And therefore, when the appointed time arrived, he read a paper accusing Cennick and his followers of "tale-bearing, back-biting, evil-speaking, dissembling, lying, and slandering."

First came the charge; then followed the verdict; and astounding the verdict was. "I, John Wesley," he read out solemnly, "by the consent and approbation of the Band Society in Kingswood, do declare the persons above mentioned to be no longer members thereof. Neither will they be so accounted until they shall openly confess their fault, and thereby do what in them lies to remove the scandal they have given."

For this tableau John Wesley had carefully prepared. There, in black and white, he set forth the alternative. It is clear that he had come to the meeting with his judg-

ment already formed. He had brought in the verdict of guilty, and now demanded open confession of guilt. He refused to listen to any explanation, any extenuation. The friends of Cennick offered to depart, if only he would retain Cennick in his service. But Wesley, convinced of Cennick's guilt, insisted still on confession of sin.

"My brother has wronged me much," he said, "but he doth not say, I repent."

There was the rub. If Cennick would only confess his guilt, there might still be harmony. But Cennick, conscious of his innocence, still pleaded Not Guilty. He had been accused of back-biting and slandering, and he knew he had never done anything of the kind.

"Unless in not speaking in your defence," he protested, "I do not know that I have wronged you at all."

To this John Wesley gave a strange retort. It is clear that his mind had been poisoned against Cennick by some scheming busybodies. Now came his great opportunity. He was either to believe the busybodies, or believe in Cennick's assertions of innocence. And Wesley, true to his credulous nature, chose the busybodies.

"It seems then," he said, "nothing remains but for each to choose which Society he pleases."

The gauntlet was down: the breach was final; and the whole blame of that historic separation was thrown on Cennick's head.

Poor Cennick! he was passing now through the deep waters of slander and misunderstanding. At one point in the controversy Charles Wesley had written him a letter full of bitter accusations. But Cennick never saw this epistle. If he had, he might have understood better why

John Wesley was so severe against him. Instead of sending the letter to Cennick, Charles Wesley gave it to his brother; and his brother discreetly kept it in his pocket, to be published when all was over.

"My dearest Brother John Cennick," ran this document, "in much love and tenderness I speak. You came to Kingswood upon my brother's sending for you. You served under him in the Gospel as a son. I need not say how well he loved you. You used the authority he gave you to overthrow his doctrine. You everywhere contradicted it. Whether true or false is not the question; but you ought first to have fairly told him, I preach contrary to you. Shall I stay here opposing you or shall I depart?

"My brother, have you thus dealt honestly and openly with him? No; but you have stolen away the people's heart from him. When did you ever vindicate us as we you? Ah! my brother, I am distressed for you. I would —but you will not receive my saying. Therefore, I can only commit you to Him who hath commanded us to forgive one another, even as God, for Christ's sake, hath forgiven us."

It is clear now how the great game had been played. It is clear that the accusation against Cennick had been couched in the form of a private letter addressed to himself. It is clear that the verdict had been given against him before the trial came on. For such skilful opponents Cennick was no match. Years later, when his body lay mouldering in the grave, his fancied crime was still brought up against him. "I visited the classes at Kingswood," wrote John Wesley in his Journal. "Here only there is no increase; and yet where was there such a prospect till that

weak[1] man, John Cennick, confounded the poor people with strange doctrines? O! what mischief may be done by one that means well. We see no end of it to this day."

It is beautiful to note how Cennick himself speaks of the painful episode. Not a word does he say against the great man under whom he had once delighted to serve. The blame, in his opinion, lay on the shoulders of certain Perfectionists who had worried Wesley to act against his own will. And that was probably the truth of the matter.

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1. "That weak man, John Cennick." On the strength of this passage, several writers persist in describing Cennick as a "weak" character. It would be hard to find an epithet less deserved. We fail to see where this mysterious "weakness" comes in.

CHAPTER III.

THE APOSTLE TO WILTSHIRE.

As Cennick, however, was still on fire with evangelistic zeal, he soon found other congenial work to do. For a while he busied himself with the organisation of his followers into an independent Society. He began with two dozen, and soon had ten dozen. But wider fields now spread before his vision. George Whitefield had just returned from America, and now from London he wrote a letter to Cennick. "Hasten hither, my dear brother," he wrote, "with all speed, and then we shall see what God intends to do for us and by us. It is a trying time now in the church. The Lord give us a due mixture of the lamb and the lion."

From Kingswood, therefore, Cennick went up to London. He preached in Whitefield's Wooden Tabernacle; returned shortly afterwards to Gloucestershire; made the acquaintance of Howell Harris, the Welsh Calvinistic Methodist, and not long after, set off with Harris on a memorable evangelistic tour. Now, for the first time, he came into contact with that historic character, King Mob. His life henceforward was full of adventure and excitement. The good folk at Upton were quite facetious. They armed themselves with a horn, a drum, and a number of brass pans, discoursed sweet music with these primitive instruments, and used the brass pans to knock the preachers on the head. Among the crowd was an inventive rogue, who put a cat in a cage, and brought a pack of hounds to bark at it; and then another man and his wife, who kept an alehouse at Hannam, rode through

the congregation, thrashed the people with their whips, and trampled them under their horses' hoofs. The little children collected dust; their parents threw it into Cennick's eyes; and some of the people hit him on the nose, and hurled stones and dead dogs at his head. At Hampton the mob let off squibs and crackers, and deluged him for an hour and a half with hog's wash and dirty water. At another place—name unknown to fame—the mob followed him, yelling, "You cheating rogue, you pick-pocketing rogue, sell us a half-penny ballad."

But the chief scene of Cennick's English labours was not Gloucestershire, but North Wiltshire. At the invitation of William Orchard, who had heard him preach at the market-cross in Sudbury, he began his notable Wiltshire career by preaching to an audience of several thousands in the little town of Castle Coom. July, 1740.—For about a year he continued to pay odd visits to various towns and villages in Wiltshire, keeping a careful eye, meanwhile, on his growing work at Kingswood; but then he was joined by Howell Harris, and the two together entered on a campaign, the like of which had never been known in that quiet country district.

1741.—The scene opens in Swindon. Cennick and Harris stood up to preach in a place called The Grove. A crowd had assembled from all parts; and a queer crowd it was. As soon as Cennick attempted to preach, some rogues, who had been hired for that very purpose, began firing muskets over the preachers' heads. They held the muzzles close up to their faces. The two preachers were soon as black as two tinkers. Neither Harris nor Cennick showed the white feather. There they stood, face to face with the foe, opening their breasts and saying,

"We are ready to lay down our lives for the Gospel, and would not resist if the guns were levelled at our hearts." The gallant offer was not accepted. As the preachers were not afraid of smoke, the rowdy rabble tried another plan. They gathered the dust from the highway, and threw it over them; they brought a fire-engine, filled it with water from the stinking ditches, and played the water upon them; they drenched them with buckets of mud and water. For fully an hour the preachers endured these insults, a spectacle of shame and derision. As the drenching continued, a certain Mr. Godhard, the author of the whole conspiracy, sat watching the performance on horseback, and laughing heartily at the sport. Yet the preachers won the victory, after all. "As they played upon brother Harris," says Cennick in his diary, "I spoke to the congregation; and when they turned their engine on me, he preached, and this continued until they had spoiled the engine." And when the preachers had left the town, the merry folk dressed up two images, called the one Harris and the other Cennick, marched them up and down, and burned them with much rejoicing in the market-place.

We hardly need to be told, after this, that the preachers retired to a friend's house to get a change of clothes.

From Swindon the preachers passed on to Stretton, where fresh delights were prepared for their entertainment. As Cennick preached a great deal about the cleansing blood of Christ, the ingenious Mr. Godhard aforesaid had managed to persuade a local butcher to save up a huge quantity of blood, with the gruesome intent of playing the same upon the preachers. He would give them blood enough and to spare, said he. But this time the plot failed completely; not one of the conspirators ever reached

Stretton to carry out his design. The Vicar of Stretton bled at the nose, and died not long afterwards; another had fits and never recovered his faculties; and another continued to bleed so profusely that in ten days he died in agony, cursing himself and all the other conspirators. For Godhard himself a tragic fate was reserved. As he rode one day on the very horse on which he had sat laughing at the preachers, his servant happened to be cleaning one of the muskets. The gun went off, the horse started, the rider fell; he sustained a hurt, and ten days later he died in raging pain.

Despite, however, these terrible judgments, the enemies of Cennick were not yet abashed. Again he came to preach at Stretton, and again the Philistines were upon him. He heard the tramp of many feet, the murmur of many voices. For two miles the road between Swindon and Stretton was lined with a surging mob, armed with swords, staves and flails. The preacher had an escort of fifty horsemen, and fifty more on foot. For a while, he was able to hold his own, and addressed a splendid gathering in an orchard. But now ensued a wild and furious scene. On came the mob in festive mood. They knocked down all who stood in their way, men, women and children alike; they trampled the Cennickers under their feet; they swore they would butcher both preacher and people. Not far from Stretton was a Baptist Chapel, and there Cennick and his friends took refuge. As soon, however, as the service was over, the mob came again in glad pursuit, hacked at the horses' legs, thrashed the people, and sent some of them flying into the ditches. Now was the time for Cennick's followers to show of what metal they were made. Some had the blood streaming down their

faces, others were nearly trampled to death. For three weeks after, Cennick's shoulders were perfectly black with bruises. The persecution was rapidly growing fiercer. At Langley the infuriated farmers soused him several times in the village pond, and lewd fellows of the baser sort threw mud and stones at the windows of the hall where he was preaching. They blamed each other for not dragging him out of the pulpit. They lay in wait for him as he came out and then, headed by one, Tuck, they attacked him and his people with scissors, cutting their clothes therewith.

But at last the tide turned in Cennick's favour. For one thing, the rumour began to spread that it was dangerous to oppose the evangelist. Again and again, the judgment fell on those who dared to molest him. It is awesome to read in Cennick's diary how many of the leading gentry of the district were struck down as though by a bolt from the blue. When Farmer Lee opposed him at Foxham, a mad dog bit the farmer's pigs, his horses died, and all his affairs went to rack and ruin. Another farming squire, who cursed Cennick in a hayfield, was struck down there and then with paralysis. At Broadstock, a shepherd who had dressed up his dog as a preacher and called it Cennick, speedily sickened and died. As the poor man lay on his bed of pain, his sin came home to his soul, and, sending for his master, he warned him solemnly of the guilt of mocking the people of God. For some time the Squire of Broadstock Abbey had avowed himself one of Cennick's bitterest opponents, and now, in the teeth of his shepherd's warning, he swore that he would cut off the legs of all Cennick's people who dared to use a public footpath leading through his field of green peas. Forthwith, a

blast destroyed his crops, and shortly afterwards, the squire himself fell down and broke his neck.[1]

Nor was this all. As time went on, it became daily plainer that most of those opposed to Cennick were rogues and vagabonds of the most disreputable kind; and now they were held up to public scorn in all their shame. As the judgment of heaven fell on the gentry, so the judgment of the law courts fell on the rank and file. At Devizes, two of Cennick's tormentors were publicly whipped for stealing fowls. Two others were tried at the Assizes for theft, and narrowly escaped the gallows. Five more had to fly for various crimes, and another went out of his mind, and moped in melancholy.

No wonder the people were smitten with fear! No wonder the persecutions ceased! Yet fear was surely not the cause of Cennick's growing power. He ruled the people not by terror, but by sympathy and love. No longer did he preach in the terrifying style of his early Kingswood days. He was a preacher after Whitefield's heart, but not of the Whitefield pattern. He preached far less about eternal punishment, and far more about the grace of Christ. He preached far less about the judgment day, and far more about the bliss of fellowship with the Friend of sinners. He preached far less like John the Baptist, and far more like John whom Jesus loved. He appealed, not to the nerves but to the heart, and sent his hearers not into convulsions, but into tears.[2]

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1 These incidents are not described by Cennick as judgments or miracles. He simply says that they occurred, and that they helped to silence his tormentors.

2. It is interesting, from this point of view, to contrast Cennick's Diary with John Wesley's Journal.

As Cennick talked to those country folk, in hall and cottage, by field and hedgerow, he was not ashamed to tell them how he himself had struck the path of pleasantness and peace. He spoke from the depths of his own experience. He loved to "tell to sinners round what a dear Saviour he had found." He loved to speak on such winsome themes as the Cleansing of Naaman, the Marriage of Isaac, the Good Shepherd, and the Good Samaritan. "I bear witness," he said, "that He is the same, yesterday, to-day, and for ever, and will heal poor sinners of whatever disease they have when they fly to Him for pardon." He was popular, not because he was clever, but because he came with a gladsome message of hope; and so it befell that the people loved him, and gathered round him in thousands. In vain some ministers and parish officers threatened the Cennickers with starvation; grand was the answer that the people gave: "If you starve us," they said, "we will still go; and rather than forbear, we will eat grass with the kine." No longer was Cennick stoned and mobbed; his foes were fast becoming his friends. As he rode one day from Tytherton to Stroud, accompanied by a gallant escort of eighty men on horseback, every village through which he passed was lined with inhabitants who had come out to behold them, "terrible as an army with banners."

Moreover, Cennick was no mere travelling preacher. If anybody had asked him in those days what right he had to go about preaching the Gospel, he could easily have given a fairly satisfactory answer. He preached, first "because the Spirit of the Lord came upon him"; and he preached, secondly because he had been authorised so to do by George Whitefield. For the greater part of his

stay in Wiltshire, he was simply one of Whitefield's lay-assistants. He was a proper officially-appointed preacher at Whitefield's Tabernacle, Moorfields. He was one of the trustees for that famous building. He regarded Whitefield as his lord and chief; he published his sermons with Whitefield's consent and approval; he composed a number of popular hymns which were sung at Whitefield's meetings; and Whitefield himself came down to Wiltshire to baptize the children, and to administer the Sacrament.

As Cennick, therefore, sped from village to village, and formed the people into religious societies, he felt, and very justly too, that so far from being an unauthorized free-lance, he was simply taking a modest share in an organised evangelical movement now sweeping over the country. He established Societies in Bath,[1] Brinkwater, Foxham, Tytherton, and other places too numerous to mention. He published a little volume of hymns, entitled "A New Hymnbook," with an account of his conversion and religious experiences; another entitled "Sacred Hymns for the Children of God in the Day of their Pilgrimage"; and a third, entitled "Sacred Hymns for the Use of Religious Societies." He published an "Exhortation to Steadfastness," addressed to his Wiltshire converts; a "Treatise on the Holy Ghost," expounding the doctrine that the Holy Spirit abides in every true believer, and a "Short Catechism for the Instruction of Youth in the Doctrines of Jesus Christ." He was, therefore, a true pastor and teacher. He had a body of assistant-preachers, exhorters, and stewards. The Wiltshire preachers, with Cennick at their head, were known as the Wiltshire Association, and the Wiltshire Association,

1. Founded August 10th, 1744, and included in the Wiltshire Plan.

in turn, was part of the great English Association, of which Whitefield was the head.

Meanwhile, he had taken a step of great importance. As the revival spread, and churches were scarce, the need for buildings arose; and, therefore, Cennick (October 25th, 1742), bought a house and a parcel of ground in Tytherton, near Chippenham. There, for three years, he made his headquarters; there he preached under a pear tree (still pointed out to the visitor); there he laid the corner-stone of a chapel, and there, with Whitefield, Howell Harris, and others, he met his exhorters and stewards, and discussed plans for the future.

And yet, somehow, he was not quite easy in his mind. For some time he had been growing steadily fonder of Zinzendorf, Spangenberg, Peter Boehler, James Hutton, and other unassuming Moravians whom he met on his repeated visits to London. "I love brother Spangenberg dearly," he wrote to Whitefield, May 1st, 1742, "my heart is with his heart in the Lord Jesus. I thank my Saviour I have been the means of removing many strange aspersions and slanders against that people, and ministers in particular." We come to an important and interesting question. What was the cause of this growing affection? For what reason did Cennick become a Moravian? What was it that he found among the Brethren that he had failed to find elsewhere? There is no doubt about the answer. He found his ideal of what a Christian church should be. He loved those Moravians for more reasons than one. He loved them for their pure evangelical principles. He loved them because they spake so much of the sufferings and meritorious death of Christ, and

because they exalted the crucified Lamb as the one true God and Saviour. He read their "Litany of the Wounds of Jesus," and shed tears of joy. He had read the well-known theological discussion between Zinzendorf and Wesley, and had come to the conclusion that Zinzendorf was in the right. "I am daily more sweetly convinced," he wrote to James Hutton, the Moravian bookseller, "of your being the favourite flock and bride of my Saviour."

He loved them on account of their personal character. He dined with Zinzendorf, chatted with Spangenberg, and was delighted with all that he saw and heard. He was amazed at their simplicity and candour.

He loved them because of their broadness of view on the keenest theological controversy of the day. As Cennick preached to the Wiltshire peasants he became ere long as discontented with the rigid Calvinism of Whitefield as he had formerly been with the rigid Arminianism of Wesley. Now was the time, he thought in his simplicity, to silence the voice of dispute for ever. Now was the time for the two great men to recognize that each had his share of the truth. For this purpose Cennick, longing for peace, invited both Wesley and Whitefield to meet the Moravians at a Conference in London. But Whitefield refused to come, and Cennick's well-meant efforts fell to the ground. For Cennick himself but one course now lay open. He was neither an extreme Arminian nor an extreme Calvinist: he was stifled in the choking atmosphere of controversial bitterness; he longed for the purer air of brotherly love; and this he found to his delight among the Brethren. At last he had found his true spiritual home. He longed for fellowship and sympathy, and found both among the Brethren. He fain would have

a faithful friend, and such he found in James Hutton. "One word from you," he said to Hutton, "is like a drop of honey in the wilderness." Further, he felt that in becoming a Moravian he would not be in any wise deserting the Church in which he had been brought up. He did not regard the Brethren as Dissenters. "I have indeed," he said, "left my mother's house since I have been born of our Saviour, but I now come back."

Finally, Cennick loved the Moravians because of their system of moral and spiritual discipline. There was great need of order down in Wiltshire. As he dug in his little garden at Tytherton, or did odd jobs about the house, he felt as though he were preparing for the coming of the Brethren. He saw that everything was in disorder, "for want of apostolic discipline, against which I myself was an enemy." He confessed that he had gone too far in his irregular mode of preaching here and there. And now on every hand the result was seen. At Bath and Bristol disorder reigned triumphant. At Kingswood, Jenkins, a Calvinist preacher, had broken into the school and taken possession of the building. At Swindon a young woman went into fits, and described them as signs of the New Birth. It was time to put an end to such absurdities. He had seen enough of them at Kingswood! But the greatest scandal of all was Jonathan Wildboar. He went about preaching all over the county: he had been burnt in the hand for stealing linen; and now he proudly shewed the wound as a proof of his devotion to Christ.

Meanwhile the need for definite action had arrived. Already the fame of Cennick had spread across St. George's Channel; already he had been invited to preach in Dublin. "I feel a flame in my heart," he said, "for the souls in

that city."[1] No longer could he tarry content in Wiltshire. He was longing to preach the Gospel of Christ, not only in Ireland, but also in foreign lands. Yet he durst not leave his Wiltshire flock like sheep without a shepherd.

For these reasons, therefore, Cennick decided that the wisest thing which he could do was to leave his Wiltshire Societies in the care of the Moravian Church. He made no secret of his designs. He laid his Irish plans before Howell Harris and the other preachers of the Association. He informed Whitefield of his desire for the Moravian Order and Discipline. He expounded to Harris his change of views on the Calvinistic question. He told his people that trials would come if they did not begin to take more notice of "such as walked disorderly." He told them they would never be happy until they had the Brethren among them. He spoke of the Brethren in such glowing terms of enthusiastic praise that both Wesley and Whitefield predicted that he would soon become a Moravian himself. He visited the Brethren in Fetter Lane. He met them in Conference. He expounded his scheme. He bombarded James Hutton with pathetic letters. In vain Howell Harris tried to dissuade him, and even preached against him at the Tabernacle. In vain the Tabernacle people declared that if Cennick left them the cause there would suffer. For a while, he wavered; but for a while only. The more he talked to the Wiltshire people the more he discovered that most of them were of the same mind with himself. His own mother attended services in Fetter Lane, and liked everything but the music. "The organ," she said, "is an offence to me. Let me know how the Lord

1. Sep. 10, 1745. Cennick to Hutton.

has directed you concerning the Moravians. I think He will not have you leave so many dear souls." His friend, Miss Winter, of Bath, was enthusiastic. "It is," she wrote, "the most agreeable news you could send me, viz., of your union with the Moravian Church. I wish a door was opened that I might have the honour of being acquainted with the Brethren." At length he called his stewards together to a Conference in Tytherton; and there (Dec. 18th, 1745) they "unanimously signed an invitation to the Brethren to come among them, proposing to give themselves wholly to their care, giving them authority to alter, change, or do whatever they should see fit among them and the Societies under their care." The invitation was accepted: some Brethren came down; and thus Cennick's Wiltshire Societies became an organic part of the Moravian Church.

CHAPTER IV.

A HAPPY HOLIDAY.—JAN. 4TH TO MAY 21ST, 1746.

As soon as Cennick had left his Wiltshire Societies in the care of the Moravian Church, he packed his portmanteau with all good speed, left his sister Sally at Kingswood, returned to London, and set off, in company with John Paul Weiss, on a memorable tour to Germany. He had heard strange tales about the Moravians, and was now resolved to go and see for himself. The weather was cold: the coach was full; and Cennick had to ride behind. At the custom-house in Harwich he had a singular and somewhat pleasant experience. He and Weiss, of course, had to shew their pass-ports, to open their bags, and to allow all their papers to be examined. But the Commissioner and his clerk were quite astonished to find that their papers contained no treasonable matter. "They were quite pleased to find," says Cennick, "that our papers only referred to religious matters, and the Commissioner said he only wished all people were like the Brethren."

He took the route viâ Flushing, Rotterdam, Amsterdam, Zeist, and Cologne. Never had he seen such wonderful sights or learned such wonderful lessons. For the last five years he had spent most of his time among the green fields and winding lanes of Wiltshire; and now dazzling wonders, bright and fair, burst day by day upon his astonished gaze. He admired the skill of the swift Dutch skaters, gliding along with their laden sledges swinging behind them. He admired the neat, clean streets of Rotterdam. He met some Brethren at Amstersdam, and was amazed at their simple, loving and childlike

behaviour. He had, he says, never seen anything like it in England. He went on to Zeist, and saw there the magnificent house which the Brethren had recently bought. It was in the midst of a fine grove, with large gardens, fountains and plantations. And now their course lay up the Rhine, and across it into the King of Prussia's dominions. As they jogged along in their lumbering waggon, he noted the huge crosses at the cross-roads, the images of the Virgin and Child, the night-lamps burning before the shrines, and the pious passers bowing and doffing before the sacred symbols. As he strolled about the streets of Cologne, he noticed how many friars there were, how some were the very picture of misery, and how others appeared to be the victims of their carnal appetites. At length he reached his destination—the old castle of Marienborn in the Wetterau.

He was now at the very hub of Moravian life. For fourteen years the Moravians maintained, in that beautiful and romantic district, some thirty miles from Frankfort-on-the-Main, what may be described without exaggeration as one of the most remarkable religious organizations in the whole history of the eighteenth century. At Marienborn Castle lived Zinzendorf himself, the founder of the renewed Church of the Brethren. At Lindheim close by the Brethren had established a theological college, where students from every university in Germany were being trained for service in the foreign field. At Herrnhaag, only three miles away, they had built a settlement in less than seven years. Among these people Cennick lived, their manners noted, and their works surveyed. He heard Count Zinzendorf preach and sing in the "Bethlehem Saloon." He had many a pleasant talk in the woods with

Peter Boehler, and found his conversation just as helpful as John Wesley had found it eight years before. He made the acquaintance of Leonard Dober, the first missionary to the negro-slaves in St. Thomas in the West Indies. He saw two famous Moravian missionaries, Beck and Soerensen, setting off for Greenland.

He inspected the Herrnhaag settlement, laid out in the form of a square, the grass plots in the four corners, the "curious engine" in the middle for pumping water out of a deep round well, the tall houses of brick and stone, the Brethren's House, crowning the brow of the hill, the Sisters' House, the Children's Home, the House for Strangers. The inside of the church was one blaze of colour. The walls and ceilings were covered with Gospel paintings. There, in the centre of the ceiling, was a representation of the Acension; in one corner, Mary Magdalene meeting Jesus on the Resurrection morning; in another, our Lord making himself known to the two disciples at Emmaus; in a third, Thomas, thrusting his hand into the Saviour's side; in a fourth, Peter, leaping from a boat to greet the Risen Master on the shores of the Lake of Tiberias. The walls were not less gorgeous than the ceiling. At one end of the church was a picture of the Jews' Passover, some Hebrews sprinkling blood on their doorposts and the destroying angel passing by; and facing this the Last Supper. Thus had the artist endeavoured to depict the contrast between the Old Covenant and the New. The two remaining walls taught the same lesson. On one was Moses lifting up the brazen serpent; on the other, the Crucifixion. As these pictures were all very large, and had been executed by one artist in less than six months, it can easily be seen that

from the artistic standpoint they were not worth very much. But, all the same, they made their impression on Cennick. They helped him to understand and appreciate the religious life of the Brethren. He understood now their devotion to Christ. He appreciated now their vivid attempts to interpret the text, "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father."

He was impressed by every service he attended, and every quaint ceremony he witnessed. He attended Lovefeasts, Morning Blessings, Preachings, Meetings for Praise. He witnessed Funerals, Baptisms, Marriages, Birthday Celebrations, and Farewell Gatherings. He noticed that even at the funerals the Brethren sang hymns of praise! He saw the "Single Brethren" march two-and-two, the musicians blowing trombones and French horns. He saw the "Single Sisters" clad in white, and says they made a "pretty sight." He heard the triumphant blast of trombones at half-past three on Easter Sunday morning, and joined with the Brethren in their early service, held in the "Field of God."

But the chief feature of the settlement at Herrnhaag was the cosmopolitan character of the population. Never had Cennick—not even in London—seen so many different races brought together. At one service he actually heard a hymn sung in twenty-two different languages. The variety in the preaching was just as great. He himself, of course, preached in English, and seemed to be generally understood; and he heard others preach in German, Esthonian, French, Spanish, Swedish, Lettish, Bohemian, Dutch, Hebrew, Danish, and Eskimo. He saw the portraits of Moravian missionaries from many parts of the world. The effect on Cennick was not bewilderment,

but honest humility. He had thought sometimes in his Wiltshire days that he was a person of some importance, and that he was doing great things for the Lord. He could think such nonsense no longer. As Cennick listened to the reading of letters from all parts of the Moravian mission-field, he felt that in comparison with the labours of the Brethren his own labours were small indeed. He was, after all, a poor specimen of a Christian. "I have indeed," he jotted down in his diary, "been a keeper of other men's vineyards, but mine own have I not kept."

Meanwhile, he had a heavy cross to bear. He was not yet a member of the Brethren's Church. He had begged for admission for over a year, but so far he had begged in vain. The situation was one of the strangest in all Church history. If a man in those days wished to become a Moravian, he found his path beset with obstacles. He had, as a rule, to wait two years, and to pass a searching examination. The case of Cennick illustrates the point. Instead of welcoming the popular preacher with open arms, the Brethren kept him waiting eighteen months. They told him not to be disheartened. He would, they said, find it far better to wait till he knew more of the Church. At length, on March 25th, he was permitted to attend the Communion as a spectator. From this fact we may draw our own conclusions. It has long been the Moravian custom to invite candidates for membership to witness the Communion just before their reception into the Church. We conclude, therefore, that Cennick was received in the spring or early summer; but the exact date, strange to say, remains unknown. His interesting diary ends abruptly just at the most interesting point. We know, however, that Cennick studied at the Theological

College at Lindheim; we know that he attended the Synod at Zeist; we know, best of all, that he returned to England, not only an enthusiastic Moravian, but helped, inspired, and well equipped for the greatest work of his life. For that work arrangements had already been made.

CHAPTER V.

DUBLIN.

1745.—As Cennick was preaching one day in Whitefield's Tabernacle, Moorfields, it happened that among the audience were two young gentlemen from Dublin, Antisel Taylor and John Hynd; and these two Irish youths, who had come to London intending to join the army, were so impressed by Cennick's preaching that they sought the acquaintance of the orator, and wrote to tell their Dublin friends of the great things they had seen and heard. Further, they even asked Cennick to venture across the Irish Sea. For the present Cennick gave a conditional answer. He had a prejudice against the Irish, and had no desire to go on a wild-goose chase. "If you," he said, "will return to your friends in Dublin and relate what you have seen and felt of the power of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and shall find people earnest to hear me and who will join with you to invite me over, I will come."

The invitation speedily came, "subscribed by many of the chiefest of the Baptists, and some other Dissenters and Churchmen." He set out from Tytherton, arrived at Holyhead and waited a week for a favourable wind. As the breeze, however, persisted in blowing with great force from the West, he had for the present to abandon his darling project; and back he went to his Tytherton folk, feeling that Satan was doing his best to baffle him.

1746.—But John Cennick was not easily baffled. Next year his opportunity came. As the buds were bursting in the Herrnhaag gardens, the young preacher, far from kith and kin, was longing to see the Emerald Isle; and no sooner had he set foot again on British soil, than off he sped across country. He rode from London to Holyhead

on horseback, had a splendid passage across, lasting only twenty-eight hours, and arrived in Dublin safe and sound. "I shall never forget," he says, "what I felt when I first stepped ashore. I could not refrain from tears, but prayed the Lord to stand by me in this strange country and not suffer me to come in vain." He had, however, no reason for alarm. The soil was already well prepared. For a year and more some pious people had been in the habit of meeting for singing and prayer under the leadership of Benjamin La Trobe, a Baptist probationer; and now, with these as faithful followers, he began his Irish career by preaching in a Baptist Hall in Skinner's Alley. The last minister there, Oswald Edwards, was a prosy preacher, of Unitarian views, whose oratory was the reverse of magnetic in its nature, and whose whole congregation could be comfortably put into one pew. But one day, in the middle of a sermon, he stopped and uttered a solemn prophecy. "Now," he said, "but few come to this place to hear, but when I am gone, a man of quite different principles from what I have taught, shall preach in this house, and his hearers shall be numerous, that neither the meeting-house nor the burying-ground shall be able to contain them."

June, 1746.—The good man's prophecy soon came true. The young preacher took the city by storm. From the first, he says, "the Lamb was with me." He was now at the very height of his powers. The blush of health was mantling on his cheek. He preached on an average twice a day. If the people of Wiltshire heard him with pleasure, the people in Dublin heard him with rapture. The majority of his hearers were Roman Catholics. The first Sunday the folk were turned away in hundreds. If Cennick

could have had St. Patrick's Cathedral there would not have been room for his hungry hearers. As two Catholic gentlemen were leaving the hall after a service one Saturday evening, one was heard to ask the other how he liked the discourse. "I believe," replied the other, "the Pope himself could not preach as well." The Hall in Skinner's Alley was crowded out. The people who wanted to get a seat had to come three hours before the time. The windows had to be removed. The people were packed all round the doors. On Sundays they even had to squat on the roofs of the neighbouring houses; they perched on every window-sill and wall; and Cennick himself had to climb through a window and creep on the heads of his people to the pulpit. Among those impressed by Cennick's Gospel was a priest of the Carmelite order. "I have studied seven years," he wrote to Cennick, "and am reckoned a tolerable preacher, but I never knew, in all my peregrinations, one that God has blessed with such talents as yourself. If you make any stay in this town you will make as many conversions as St. Francis Xavier among the wild Pagans. God preserve you!"

Nor did Cennick confine his efforts to preaching in Skinner's Alley. He conducted services in Bride's Alley, for two hundred zealous young Churchmen, who met with the Archbishop's approval. He held special services for young men in private houses. He visited every house in the neighbourhood, and discovered folk of many persuasions. He chatted with Churchmen, Presbyterians, Baptists, Quakers, Separatists, Bradilonians, and Muggletonians; and one and all greeted him in the streets with pleasant smiles of welcome.

But Cennick had not been long in Dublin before the hounds of persecution were snapping at his heels. As soon as it became generally known that Cennick was a Moravian, all sorts of tales were told about him. About three years earlier an ignorant scribbler, Gilbert Tennant, had attacked the Brethren in a book entitled "Some Account of the Principles of the Moravians;" and now some copies of this scurrilous treatise were passed from hand to hand in Dublin. If all that Gilbert Tennant said were true, it was clear that the Moravians were a dangerous people, and Cennick a dangerous teacher. They were teachers, said Tennant, of licentious doctrines subversive of all morality. They were silent and stupid. They neglected prayer. They had some peculiar and mysterious method of "purging out the accursed thing." They drank liquor at their Lovefeasts. They despised good books and confessions of faith. They hid such principles as they thought would disgust: they endeavoured to insinuate themselves into people's affections by smiles and soft discourses; and they took special care to apply to young persons, females, and ignorant people. The result can easily be imagined. As these absurd stories passed from lip to lip, the feeling against Cennick rose to fever-heat. At one of the services in Skinner's Alley, a number of gentlemen, with swords drawn, rushed in and broke up the meeting. At another, says the local diary, "Near 2,000 stones were thrown against Brothers Cennick and La Trobe, of which, however, not one did hit them." We observe the accuracy of that report. It reads as if some one had taken the trouble to collect the stones and count them. The opposition took a variety of forms. The name of Cennick was introduced into comic

songs at the music-halls. Father Duggan published a pamphlet entitled "The Lady's Letter to Mr. Cennick," and Father Lyons gravely assured his flock that Cennick was not a real man at all, but the devil in human shape. If Cennick had ventured out alone in those days he would certainly have been torn in pieces; the mobs were increasing week by week, and were sometimes fifteen thousand in number. "It was dangerous," says Cennick, "for our people to go out after the meetings were ended. If some religious soldiers had not guarded me home every night, at whose head was one Patterson, an officer, it would have been with great difficulty we could have escaped, but these got me in their midst, and, with their swords drawn, brought me to my lodgings; but we were pelted with dirt, stones and bricks, on all sides, by perhaps fifteen or twenty thousand mob."

The climax was reached at Christmas, when Cennick, in a sermon, ventured to denounce the adoration of the Virgin Mary. "I curse and blaspheme," he said, "all the gods in heaven but the Babe that lay in Mary's lap, the Babe that lay in swaddling clothes." The quick-witted Irish people jumped at the phrase, and nicknamed him "Swaddling John."

1747. And yet, despite the tongue of slander, the success of the preacher was wonderful. If Cennick had only been a rich man, it is probable that the Hall in Skinner's Alley would have become the headquarters of a powerful Moravian cause. He had now no fewer than five hundred sturdy followers. Meanwhile, however, John Wesley had come to preach in Dublin. He saw the hall, liked the look of it, came to terms with the owner, and bought it. For some months the Brethren had to be content to hold their

meetings in private houses; but finally they obtained another hall in Big Booter Lane;[1] John Toeltschig and other Moravian leaders came over to help in the work; and thus was formed the congregation which exists in Dublin to the present day.

And now we come to an exceeding wonder. As the church in Booter Lane began to thrive, the rumour spread among certain folk that "Swaddling John" was preaching doctrines hostile to the Episcopal Protestant Church; and the result was that a certain Churchman, John Roche, published an alarmist book, entitled "The Moravian Heresy." He accused Cennick of three capital crimes. He accused him, first, of teetotalism, a form of self-denial which Roche regarded as a symptom of a disordered intellect. He accused him, secondly, of belonging to a sect which suffered from mysterious diseases inflicted by the devil. He accused him, thirdly, of Antinomian doctrine. Of all accusations brought against Cennick this was the most serious. It had often been brought against him in Wiltshire, and now it was repeated in Dublin. But the accusation had not a particle of truth. If ever a man was a lover of righteousness, it was honest John Cennick. He longed for perfection as eagerly as John Wesley himself.

I want, as faithful Christians do,
  To walk and live to Thee,
And by my conversation shew
  That Thou hast died for me.

I want so circumspect to live
  So free from every sin,
That e'en the worldly may perceive
  That I with Thee have been.

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1. Now called Bishop Street.

O! grant me through Thy precious blood,
Thy Gospel thus to adorn;
I ask no more, my Lord, my God,
Till I to Thee return.

Again and again he insisted in his sermons that a faith which did not lead to good works was no faith at all. "Whenever," he said, "I see men living sinful lives, and yet prating of faith, I would say, Shew it by your fruits; and know that as yet you have neither part nor lot in the matter." "No drunkard," he said, "or unclean person, no whoremonger, or adulterer, or swearer, or railer, or persecutor, or friend of the world, is a believer."

But the strangest thing in Roche's book is the reason he gives for attacking the Moravians. He intended, when he sat down to his task, to denounce both Methodists and Moravians, "but," he says, "the Moravians being the more dangerous, subtle, and powerful sect, and I fear will be the more obstinate, I shall treat of them first." It is clear what this implies. It implies that Cennick was a mighty force in the religious life of Dublin. It was he, in fact, who first lighted the revival-torch in Ireland.

CHAPTER VI.

THE NORTH OF IRELAND.

1746. We come to the brightest part of Cennick's career. Among those who thronged the Hall in Skinner's Alley was a Ballymena grocer, called Joseph Deane, who happened to be in Dublin on business. He was so impressed by Cennick's preaching that he asked him to come up North. Cennick accepted the invitation. As he came within sight of Ballymena, he felt himself suddenly overcome by a spirit of deep dejection; but, opening his Moravian text-book, he read the words: "Go, ye swift messengers, to a nation scattered and peeled, a nation meted out and trodden down."[1] And then followed the antiphon, "Go, guarded by a thousand angels; go your way with the near presence of Immanuel." To Cennick the words were prophetic of coming trouble.

"I believe," said he to La Trobe, his comrade, "as sure as we are here there will be persecution. However, I am comforted with these words, 'Go, guarded by a thousand angels.'"

As soon as he arrived in Ballymena he had the privilege of making the acquaintance of two Presbyterian ministers; and discovered, perhaps to his surprise, that the rigid Protestants of Ulster were just as much disposed to withstand him as the Papist Boys of Dublin. The scene of the first skirmish was an hotel.

"I suppose you think," said one of the ministers, "that the people here are not properly taught."

"Sir," replied Cennick, "I don't know how you may look upon it, but I have no such ideas. I am a servant of

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1 Isaiah xviii., 2.

Jesus Christ, and go where I am invited. I know not if here the people hear the pure Gospel or not; but I am sure, if you are a minister of Christ, I shall do you no harm, but perhaps help you a little. If you have not preached the Gospel purely, I am come to do it, and the people need it."

He had, by that straightforward speech, made a secret enemy already.

The first Sunday a strange incident occurred. As Cennick was preaching in a large upper-room near the Ballymena market-house, on Christ the only true foundation, the main beam of the house broke, and the floor began to give way; but the people, instead of shrieking with terror, regarded the incident as nothing less than a miraculous confirmation of the sermon. It was just the style of thing that they enjoyed. Except they saw signs and wonders, said Cennick, they would not believe.

The news of his arrival spread for miles, and the local Presbyterian ministers and elders were feeling very uneasy. The air was hot with suspicion, and rumours hovered about like midgets. The Young Pretender's great rebellion had only just been quashed. No doubt young Cennick was one of his traitorous crew. He was a Covenanter, a rebel, a spy, a rogue, a Jesuit, a plotter, an agent of the Pope. Forthwith, in patriotic zeal, came Captain Adair, the Lord of the Manor, to the rescue of the faithful and loyal. As Cennick was pronouncing the benediction at the close of a service in the open air, the gallant Captain, his blood inflamed with liquor, came riding along the street with his footman, struck Cennick several times with his whip, and then, drawing his sword, attempted to stab the preacher. But just then his horse started, and the Captain told his footman to knock Cennick down. The obedient footman

battered Cennick on the head with his fists. The preacher staggered. The people caught him and hurried him into a house. The Captain slid from his horse and pursued, sword in hand. The people pushed Cennick into a dark room. There he fell headlong over a heap of turf. The Captain swore he would have his blood. Let none of the loyal citizens of Ballymena venture to harbour Cennick. If they did, he would pull down their houses. The people covered Cennick with a ragged great-coat, hurried him out by a back-door, helped him through gardens and over hedges, and thus got him out of harm's way. The whole town of Ballymena was in commotion. Some said the preacher was killed; others ran hither and thither trying to find him.

At this crisis the Captain's son came riding into the town, met the excited crowd dispersing, and, seeing an old woman weeping and wailing, said to her in a joking way,

"Old wife, why do ye greet?"

"O! my curse on the Captain," she moaned; "he has killed the minister."

The young fellow was horror-struck. He clapped his spurs to his horse, galloped off to the scene of action, seized his raving father by main force, and took him sadly home.

For the present, therefore, Cennick thought that the less he saw of patriotic Ballymena the better. As soon as he could hire a pair of horses, he bade farewell to Joseph Deane and other friends; commended the town to the Lord; and then, with his head throbbing with bruises, and yet with joy bubbling up in his heart, rode back with La Trobe to Dublin. What does this mean? Does it mean that Cennick was afraid of the Ulster Scot? It means nothing of the sort. For the next two years he was

so busy in Dublin that his Ballymena friends had to wait; but as soon as he had seen the Dublin people comfortably settled in Booter Lane, he met the Brethren in a close Conference, and arranged that while they should stay in Dublin he should be free to go where he pleased.[1] Meanwhile he had settled a private matter of no small interest. He had often, when writing to James Hutton from Wiltshire, made mention of some worthy people who lived in the village of Clack, Mr. and Mrs. Bryant; but, strange to say, he never hinted that the Bryants had a daughter, Jane. Now, however, he went over to Wiltshire, married Jane Bryant, brought her to Dublin, and took her with him on most of his journeys in Ulster.

1748.—He had now a stupendous task to fulfil. He had come to preach the Gospel in a land where the Gospel was little known. He had come to a people who had long been content with a cold, orthodox faith, which had little effect on the heart and life. As Cennick rode along the undulating road that leads from Antrim to Ballymena, he was overtaken by a serious man, who told him that the Ulster ministers no longer preached Christ. "Now," said he, "I am going I don't know where to hear the Word of God."

But this time Cennick acted with more circumspection. Instead of preaching in Ballymena itself, where the Lord of the Manor's authority reigned supreme, he hired a field from a Quaker gentleman in a district which in those days rejoiced in the name of Sodom. But even in Sodom Cennick had no peace. As he and his friends set off to the preaching-place, two Captains of Militia, with a band of

1. Conference Minutes, May 2nd, 1748. The Brethren left in charge of the Dublin work were Toeltschig and Bryzelius.

drummers, drummed them out of the town. Never had Cennick heard a more hideous hubbub. In vain he implored the gallant Captains for Christ's sake to desist. The two heroes continued their merciless fun. Who could preach in the midst of such a racket? Cennick had a powerful voice, and could preach for hours without becoming hoarse; but even his voice was not enough to drown the deafening din of those dreadful drums. For half-an-hour Cennick waited patiently to see what would be the end. Again and again, while the drums were rolling, a drunken schoolmaster pulled him down from his place; and a zealous elder, scolding and raving, raised his staff to strike. But this was too much for the crowd. "An elder," said they, "must be no striker"; and the zealous elder subsided. The moments passed on: the drums still rolled: and there the preacher stood and waited. His comrade-in-arms, Jonathan Binns, wished him to beat a retreat. But Cennick stuck to his guns like a hero. "I feel and know," he said, "that God has much people in this place." At length his friends took him by force, led him into the Quaker's house, and finally found him another field where he was able to preach in peace.

But Cennick's foes, like the fox in the fable, had more tricks than one. As they could really find no evil in the man, and yet desired to be rid of him somehow, they persuaded one Doffin, "a vagabond and wicked fellow," to swear that he had seen Cennick seven years before in the Isle of Man, and that Cennick had there misconducted himself and been compelled to flee from the arm of the law. Of all the liars that Cennick met, this Doffin was the most audacious and impudent. He took his oath upon the New Testament before the local justices. He said that he could

swear to Cennick anywhere, because he squinted and had a mark on his chin. He denounced him as a vile criminal, an impostor, a sham Quaker. The justices roared with laughter, and the ministers and elders present sat holding their sides.

"I believe," said Cennick, "not one of you thinks that true which this man has sworn."

"Yes," they said, "we believe it, unless you will swear to the contrary."

Now Cennick, like many Moravians of those days, objected to taking an oath at all. He would not have taken an oath to save his own life.

"If he had sworn I had killed a man," he proudly answered, "I would not swear to the contrary."

Then, turning to Doffin, he said, "God knows I never was in the Isle of Man, and never saw it. Therefore, shall He judge between me and you to-day."

The character of Cennick now shone forth in all its radiant beauty. If only he had cared to do so, he could easily have covered Doffin with confusion; for two ladies came forward and offered to swear that they had heard Cennick preaching in Bristol at the very time when, according to Doffin, he was masquerading in the Isle of Man. But Cennick, gentle and forgiving to foes, refused to take further proceedings.

He had, however, by refusing to swear, given his enemies a good handle against him. About two months later he was summoned to Shane's Castle to take the oaths of abjuration and allegiance. He found their worships, Adair and O'Neil, not in Shane's Castle, but drinking punch in a public-house. As soon as he entered, they asked him to sit down, told him he had

been accused of being a Jesuit or agent of the Pope, and offered him the oaths to sign in due form. Cennick soon explained his position.

"Against the substance of the oath," he said, "I have nothing, because I love the King, and believe him to be my true and lawful sovereign."

He explained further that the Brethren in America had already, by Act of Parliament, been excused from taking an oath. He contended that the Brethren were well-known, both in England and in Ireland, as true and loyal subjects. He said that they had the good-will of the Archbishops of Canterbury and Armagh. His explanations fell on adders' ears. What cared such men as Adair and O'Neil for all the bishops in Christendom? The scene in the bar parlour became uproarious. There sat Cennick, the meek Moravian, supported by Deane and a few more friends; there sat the two patriotic topers, tippling punch and hurling curses. If Cennick refused to swear, said they, they would clap him in Carrickfergus gaol that very night. Adair's blood was boiling. It was easy to see he had been tasting. He called Cennick a rogue, a rascal, and a Jesuit. He drank damnation to all his principles, without, of course, the slightest idea what those principles were. He asked him why he would not swear, and then get absolution from the Pope. "Sir," retorted Cennick, "I am no rogue, rascal, or Jesuit, nor have I anything to do with the Pope or the Church of Rome; but I am a true Protestant and loyal subject to King George, for whom I am ready to shed the last drop of my blood."

Adair cursed him again, and offered him a glass of punch.

"Drink," he roared, "and soften your conscience!"

The preacher loyally drank His Majesty's health. At length, after further parley, the two fiery gentlemen gave judgment. They said that if Cennick would pay £2 on bail, they would allow him to roam about for three months as a prisoner at large. Cennick borrowed the £2, paid the bail, retired to his lodgings, and solaced his soul by reading the text for the day: "The enemy said, I will pursue, I will overtake; my lust shall be satisfied upon them."[1] But this time the enemy was mistaken. As Cennick's three months of liberty drew to a close, O'Neil began to brag at the racecourse that he would soon have Cennick in his grip; he would preach for him, he said, all over the country. But when the fateful day arrived, O'Neil himself was seized with fits, and died soon after, shrieking in his agony, "Lord, forgive me, and I will never more hurt Thy clergy."

But Cennick's enemies were not baffled yet. As the preacher took no collections at his services, at any rate, not till two or three years later, when chapel-building commenced, a good many people could not help wondering how he kept the wolf from the door; and accordingly, some Presbyterian ministers, putting their heads together, came to the indisputable conclusion that Cennick was secretly supplied with money either from France or from Rome. They must really have him removed without delay; he was a danger to the common weal. They prepared a petition stating their suspicions, handed in the document to Lord Massereene, and besought his lordship to banish Cennick from those parts. But Massereene laughed the matter to scorn, and seems to have thrown the petition

1. Exodus xv, 9.

out of his window. At any rate, Cennick afterwards found it lying by the roadside.

It was time for Cennick to take measures of self-defence. He had come to Ulster, not to cause strife, but to preach the Gospel to the poor. "I am not afraid," he said to a justice who had threatened to put him in the stocks, "I know whose servant I am, and that my views in preaching are upright." He had been to Dublin, seen the Archbishop, and obtained the promise of his protection, and now he appealed to Rider, Bishop of Down and Connor. The Bishop gave him a hearty welcome, and had him in to dinner. "Mr. Cennick," he said, spreading out his hands, "you shall have fair play in my diocese." And fair play Cennick had henceforward. It was vain for some of the clergy to complain that Cennick was emptying their pulpits. "Preach what Cennick preaches," said the Bishop, "preach Christ crucified, and then the people will not have to go to Cennick to hear the Gospel."

Meanwhile, the revival in the north had begun, and spread from county to county. At Ballybollon, Cennick preached a sermon which set the country-side on fire. There the Danes in days of old had built a fortification, and the place was known as Ballybollon Fort; there, in the reign of Charles II, had preached Peden, the Prophet; and there, one day, the Prophet had said, "O fort, I charge ye in the name of the Lord! never let anyone preach here any more till a bonny wee lad shall come frae England, and preach the pure Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ." And now the bonnie wee lad frae England had come; and there he stood with his wavy hair, and fair, boyish face, and the people listened with tears of joy flowing down their cheeks. He had a message for them all. He told them how some

were wasting their lives in feasting, in drinking, in unholy lusts; how others, for all their fair show of piety, had hearts as hard as the nether millstone; how some would be too respectable to welcome Christ if He came among them in the flesh; how others were eaten up in the lust of gold. And then came the grand appeal, in Cennick's favourite vein: "Ye drunkards and rioters, ye lovers of feasting and banqueting, come ye to the marriage-feast of the Lamb. Jesus invites you to drink freely of the fountain of life, and to eat of the hidden manna. Ye who are fond of music, come and hearken to our Saviour, for His voice is sweet; all the music of the angels is nothing else but the echo of His love and forgiveness. Do you love a concert? Come up, and you shall see ten thousand harping upon their harps before the Lamb that was slain, and millions of trumpets blowing to the honour of His name. Do ye esteem songs? O get your lips touched with a coal from off the altar, and you shall join in the song of Moses and the Lamb upon Mount Zion."

During five years Cennick was now engaged in preaching and forming religious societies in Cos. Antrim, Down, Derry, Armagh, Tyrone, Cavan, Monaghan and Donegal. He was known to the people as "the preacher," and his fame ran on before him like a herald. As he galloped along the country roads, sometimes a would-be wit would sing out after him, "There goes Swaddling Jack"; but, speaking broadly, Cennick was welcomed as an angel of light. Nowhere had Cennick a better reception than in the North of Ireland; nowhere did he address larger audiences; nowhere did he kindle more enthusiasm; nowhere was he more kindly treated; nowhere, on the

whole, was he less insulted. At Ballee, not far from Ballymena, he addressed a crowd of 10,000. At Ballynahone, he addressed 10,000 again; and after the service he was overwhelmed with invitations to preach. He was loved and revered, not by one class only, but by all classes and all denominations. At Moneymore, the Presbyterians asked him to stop and be their minister. At Ballynahone, the Roman Catholics said that if he would only settle there, they would never go to Mass again. At Careeny, in Derry, a Roman Catholic priest, who had been to Rome, and had his foot washed by the Pope, confessed that Cennick was right in his doctrine, shed tears at the meeting, and borrowed a Moravian Manual of Doctrine. At Lisnamara, he was invited by the rector to preach in the parish church. At New Mills, the people rushed out from their cabins, barred his way, offered him milk, and besought him saying, "If you cannot stop to preach, at least come into our houses to pray." The first time he went to Glenavy, near Ballinderry, the road was lined with people for full two miles. At one of his meetings, an excited Papist called out in his enthusiasm, "If I could but throw a can of holy water over you, you would be the most blessed man in the world." But surely the strangest scene of all occurred at Castle Dawson. At the close of a service in the barrack yard, Mr. Justice Downey, the local clergyman, and several other prominent gentlemen came up and publicly kissed the preacher. He was so beloved, that many of the innkeepers gave him board and lodging free of charge. It paid them well to do so. The news that Cennick was staying in the village was sure to bring plenty of custom. His popularity aroused the envy of Father O'Lavery, the parish

priest at Ballinderry. His reverence was an eccentric character. As he rode one day into Ballinderry, he shouted out, "Make way for the devil and priest O'Lavery." He called himself the Red, Roving, Ranting, Rector of Moira, Magheragallin and Dromore. He wished, he said, he had the privilege of accompanying Cennick on his journeys. He would pocket the money and drink the liquor that Cennick persistently refused.

As the revival spread, the labours of Cennick waxed more and more incessant. He often addressed thousands in the open air, with the rain coming down in torrents, and soaking him to the skin. He preached in old barns, in disused cloth mills, and in village cock-pits. He slept in the old ruined church at Portmore, in the very room where Jeremy Taylor wrote his "Holy Living and Holy Dying." He sat on the roadside, cold and lonely, munching his meagre lunch of bread and cheese. If money was plentiful, he used a horse; if not, he would walk twenty miles to preach.

How was it that this young preacher was so beloved? It was not because he prophesied smooth things. The love of the people was mingled with awe. If Cennick was sitting with a circle of friends and began to talk about things Divine, the company fell on their knees by instinct.

It was not because he had kissed the blarney stone. He rebuked the people boldly for their drunken habits, their brutal sports, their cold formality, their empty gabble. He was often disgusted, not only with the people, but also with the ministers and elders. "The never-ending talk," he said, "of some of these ministers and elders, esteemed wise here, tries me to the quick; but I either pluck up courage and stop them at once, or leave them to them-

selves as soon as I can. I never, however, fail to tell them how I hate a religious head and tongue, with an unconverted heart."

At a place called The Grange, he gave a rebuke to a Presbyterian minister. The minister said he hoped he had the Spirit. "No sir!" said Cennick, "don't hope you have it, for I assure you you have it not."

"How do you know?" faltered the minister. "Because," replied Cennick, "you are a drunkard almost daily; you are a slanderer, for you have secretly told many of your hearers I was a rogue; you are also a liar, for you have in public and private said I was a Jesuit. Now a person in whom is the Holy Ghost cannot do these things."

It was not because he courted popularity. Full well he knew that much of the enthusiasm did not go very deep. It saddened him to think that the chief result of his preaching was personal attachment to himself. In spite of his love for these poor people, he often grew sick of their constant jabber, and sought retirement in the lonely bogs. "The people hereabouts," he complained, "are such talkers that they are enough to distract anyone who comes near them, and themselves too. I have often observed that when people have got a little whiskey into their heads they are most inclined to talk about religion. The spirit shops are full of men disputing on religious topics. It would be well if they thought as much as they talk."

It was not because he preached fashionable doctrines, or belonged to a fashionable church. As Cennick passed from village to village, he took care to let the people know that he himself was a minister of the Brethren's Church. He was ordained a Deacon at London (Sep. 30th, 1749), by Peter Boehler and Leonard Dober, and henceforward

he took his stand as an authorized representative of the Brethren's Church. He had a body of Moravian assistant preachers. He explained the origin, and told the history, of the Brethren; he defended their principles, their doctrine, their constitution; he held meetings of the special Moravian type, such as lovefeasts and children's meetings; he enforced their discipline, and opposed the practice of drinking at christenings and funerals. His sister, Sarah, conducted meetings for single sisters.

He explained, further, that in some ways the Brethren's Church was different in principle from the Irish Presbyterian Church. He was in the stronghold of rigid Calvinism, and yet he declared that he himself was no rigid Calvinist. At Moira, for example, he conducted a public debate with Mr. Arrat, a Scotch seceding minister. The scene was the upper room of a public-house. About sixty persons assembled to witness the contest. The point of discussion was the Brethren's doctrinal standpoint. Cennick said that the Brethren's Confession of Faith was the Scriptures, but that on the whole they agreed with the Augsburg Confession. But this answer was far too broad for a rigid Scotch Calvinist. What attitude, he asked, did Cennick and the Brethren adopt towards the Westminster Confession of Faith and the Catechism?

"I don't believe the doctrine of absolute reprobation," said Cennick, "else, in general, I look upon the Westminster Confession of Faith as orthodox."

"Now," said the minister, turning to the people, "I will shew you that Mr. Cennick is in great errors."

The heckling began. "Pray, sir, don't you believe that God foreknows everything?"

"Yes, undoubtedly."

"But that is the same as fore-ordaining."

"No; for instance, I may foresee a person rushing into a pit or down a precipice, and have no hand in it, or be the cause of it. Pray, Mr. Arrat, tell me if you believe absolute unconditional reprobation?"

"Yes."

"Do you believe that God foreordained whatever He foresaw?

"Yes."

"Do you believe He foresaw the adulteries of the adulterer?"

"Yes."

"Did He ordain it?"

"Yes."

"And do you believe He foresaw the murders of the murderer?"

"Yes."

"Did He ordain it?"

"Yes."

The people were horrified. "You see," said Cennick, "what a minister you have. I abhor and tread under my feet, as cursed and wicked, such blasphemies."

"What," interrupted a Quaker gentleman, addressing Arrat, "dost thou not believe God's free grace for all mankind? If thou dost not believe free grace for all, thou art damned, friend."

Cennick continued the discussion. "I cannot believe reprobation, for then I must doubt the sincerity of God and the Scriptures, since in Ezekiel God swears *He would not* have the death of a sinner, but had rather he would repent

and live[1]; and our Saviour wept over Jerusalem saying, 'How often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not.'"

But the stout old Calvinist still held to his point. "It is impossible," he said, "to hold election and not reprobation."

Nevertheless, Cennick did the impossible. "I believe one, and deny the other. I believe the word of God, and what does not appear reconcilable with my judgment, I know, nevertheless, is possible with God, and clear as the light. You, for the sake of the darling principle of reprobation, must either entirely leave out or wrest a good part of the Scriptures, while I, out of conscience, and a religious submission to God's word, implicitly believe all."

The foregoing conversation is instructive in more ways than one. It shews that Cennick was no rigid Calvinist; it shews that he was a typical Moravian, content to take the Scriptures as they stand, without contending too rigidly for dogma; it shews, above all, that he had the courage of his convictions.

Thus did Cennick lay the foundations of the Moravian Church in the North of Ireland.

It is time to attempt an estimate of his work. If we judge that work by the meagre results which remain to the present day, we shall come to a very erroneous conclusion. The truth is that Cennick was a practical worker as well as a stirring preacher. When Peter Boehler visited Ulster in 1752, he found that Cennick had built ten chapels, and

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1. This was John Wesley's argument, in his famous sermon on Free Grace.

organized forty religious societies. Nor does even this give a true idea of the full extent of his labours. It has been estimated by a competent authority,[1] that before Cennick's labours closed, the Brethren had no fewer than two hundred and twenty religious societies and preaching-places in the North of Ireland. It is vain to contend that all that remain are four small congregations at Gracehill, Ballinderry, Gracefield, and Kilwarlin. The evidence of the old records is overwhelming. It proves that Cennick was the chief leader of the evangelical revival in the North of Ireland; it proves that his Gospel preaching resulted in the awakening, not of hundreds merely, but of thousands. Count Zinzendorf called him "Paul Revived." The epithet was not entirely undeserved. Nor is Cennick forgotten in Ireland yet. The fame of his labours linger still in many a village and hamlet. The visitor to Ulster may test the matter for himself. Let him ask the old folk to tell him the name of the great preacher who came to the North a hundred and fifty years ago. And the name that the people will mention is that of Cennick.

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1. The late Bishop A. C. Hassè.

CHAPTER VII.

THE END. 1755.

But now the bell of Cennick's life was ringing to evensong. For some time he had been suffering from great weakness of body and great depression of mind; and now, worn out with many labours, he longed, like St. Paul, to depart and to be with Christ, which is far better. It is touching to read the pathetic prayer which was afterwards found in his pocket-book:—

> But take it not amiss! O! be not grieved!
> I want from pilgrimage to be relieved.
> I want to be dissolved and no more here
> A wanderer be, a banished foreigner.
> I would not Thee offend: Thou know'st my heart,
> Nor one short day before Thy time depart;
> But I am weary and dejected, too:
> O let me to eternal mansions go.

What was the cause of this deep dejection? In one so young, it seems almost morbid. If ever a man had reason to be happy, it was surely Cennick at this stage of his career. His home-life was, as far as we know, all that could be desired. He had settled down, first at Craigbilly, and afterwards at Gloonen, near Ballymena. He took his wife with him on many of his journeys, and would surely not desire to leave her desolate. He had two little daughters dependent on him.[1] He had every reason to desire long life. He lived on the best of terms with the other Brethren. He was highly esteemed by Zinzendorf, Boehler, Hutton, Okely, Watteville, and other Moravian leaders well known in those days. He had hundreds of friends both in England and in Ireland. He had seen the

1. Cennick had three daughters. One was delicate, and died in infancy. Another lived to the age of fifteen or thereabouts, and was buried at Ockbrook. The third married the Moravian minister, Swertner.

establishment of congregations in Gracehill, Gracefield, Ballinderry, Kilwarlin, and Dublin. He had heard that one of his bitterest enemies—the very Captain who had formed the plot to drum him out of Ballymena—had repented of his sin and asked to be admitted as a member of the Brethren's Church. He had been invited by the next O'Neil to preach in the grounds at Shane's Castle. He knew that two of his converts, the Foster-Barhams, were promoting missionary work in Jamaica. If all this was not enough, he had the joy of knowing that his work was appreciated in nearly every congregation in the British section of the Brethren's Church. His labours, during the last few years, had not been confined to Ireland. He had preached, and established a society, at Leominster. He had kept on friendly terms with Howell Harris, had often, at Harris's special request, preached in South Wales, and had seen a society established at Haverfordwest. He had preached repeatedly at the Brethren's Chapel in Fetter Lane, London; and there, on one occasion, two dozen of his hearers were admitted as members of the London Congregation. He had also been during several months the regular preacher at another chapel in White's Alley. He had paid a visit to Barking, in Essex, and been the means of a revival there. He had preached for his friend La Trobe in Bedford, and had addressed large auditories in Ockbrook, Derbyshire. He had received a splendid welcome in Yorkshire, preaching to thousands at Holbeck, Horton, Halifax, Wyke, Baildon, Mirfield, Gomersal, and Fulneck.

And yet Cennick was dejected. At least three probable reasons may be assigned. For one thing, he had

certainly been overworked; no man could preach so often in damp clothes and draughty barns without paying the penalty. It is clear, further, from his own diary, that many of the business arrangements connected with the building of chapels and leasing of property were carried out by Cennick himself. He even took part in the manual labour required. He helped to lay the foundations of the chapels at Gloonen and Lisnamara. He helped to build the chapel at Ballinderry, and superintended the glaziers at their work. He had sunk a well at Gloonen, still known as "Cennick's Well."

Further, Cennick had to bear his share of those financial difficulties which just at this period oppressed and harassed the Moravian Church. He was not, apparently, a man of means himself. He had not sprung from a well-to-do family. His brother in London was a humble plumber. He once declared humorously that his own stipend was scarcely enough to keep a mouse. He was sometimes short of money to bait his horse. He often lived on rather thin diet. He had often to rely on the kindness of others for milk, butter and eggs, and he and his assistants at Gracehill were once so pinched that they solemnly passed a resolution not to drink tea more than once a day.

Above all, it is an ominous fact that the last two years of Cennick's life were the very years when the great literary attack was made on the Moravian Church. He saw his beloved Brethren depicted as the vilest criminals in the land. He saw them described as atheists, robbers, conspirators, kidnappers, sensualists, adulterers. Among those who hit the Brethren hardest was his dear old friend, George Whitefield. This was the most unkindest cut of

of all. No wonder Cennick's heart was broken; no wonder he longed to be "beyond the reach of slanders, wrongs or harms."

For these reasons, therefore, the young preacher now asked leave to lay his staff and sandals by. He had often, in his sermons, depicted the joy of the believer when first he should see the Master face to face in the land where glory dwelleth. "Oh! what wilt thou think," he said in one discourse,[1] "when thou seest Him, and when it shall be told thee, That is thy Master! That is the face which was once marred more than any man's! That is the Lamb who took away thy sins! Those are the arms that were once bound to the Cross, which now are stretched out to embrace and caress thee! That is the King's son, who hath betrothed thee to Himself, in His loving kindness, mercy, and righteousness! I say, what wilt thou think, or what wilt thou do? I know thou wilt alight, and cover thy face for joy and shame, and fall down before Him."

For that blest meeting, Cennick now was sighing. "I think," he wrote to Johannes de Watteville, "I have finished with the North of Ireland. I am leaving just at the right time. I am ready to go wherever the Saviour wants me; but the best of all would be to go to the Lord Himself. If I stay here much longer, I fear I shall damage His work."

He confided the same sad thought to his private note-book.

> Now, Lord, at peace with Thee and all below,
> Let me depart and to Thy kingdom go;
> I long to kiss that hand which once me blessed,
> Those feet that travelled to procure my rest;
> Those lips that me confessed, and that dear head
> That bowed when on it all my sins were laid.

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1. Preached at Exeter.

The story of his end is soon told. He went for the last time to Dublin, opened the new chapel in Booter Lane, and preached again to crowded audiences. From Dublin he intended to pay another visit to South Wales; and had promised to let the London Brethren know of his safe arrival in that country. "I am bound for Wales," he wrote to Francis Okely, then minister at Dukinfield, "and through Bristol to London.....My heart is as thy own heart, and Jesus shall still be the faithful witness between us that we will aim at nothing in all our love and correspondence but to live and act for His name's sake. The best blessings He has light upon thee, keep thee in peace and in true prosperity; and in all thy labours, His ears be open to thy thoughts and complaints; and His hand lead thee till I kiss thee above."

The last sentence gave Okely a strange thrill. He knew what Cennick's wishes were, and feared that they would soon be gratified. It was Saturday afternoon, June 28th, 1755; and a company of Brethren in Fetter Lane were talking about the preacher and wondering why he had not sent them any word, when suddenly a messenger came to say that Cennick himself had arrived. They went out to welcome him, and found that he was very ill. "I am extremely sick and feverish," he said, "and I think my senses fail me a little. I have scarce eaten, drunk, or slept since I landed. I have had much ado to sit the horse. Those five days were very long ones. How thankful I am that I am got hither at last."

He had evidently ridden from Holyhead to London in a state of high fever. His flesh burned like a hot coal. They put him to bed, did the best they could for him, and asked him why he had not broken his journey when he felt

the illness coming on. "I did not choose," he sadly said, "to lie down in a strange place. I wanted to reach home first."

Yes! that was the truth of it. He wanted to reach Home. His illness lasted about a week. He lay in the room which is now the vestry of the Moravian Chapel in Fetter Lane. The fever rapidly grew worse. Not a word did he utter, or sign make, unbecoming a Christian. He became delirious, and rambled about his friends and his work in Ireland. Among those who came to see him was Bishop Gambold. The Bishop told him this illness might be his last.

"I should like that best of all," he said quietly. "I want to be taken to His arms."

"Dear Saviour, give me patience," he was heard to say from time to time.

Among his favourite verses were the following :—

> Yes! their last look, serene and clear,
> Shall witness they believers were.

He tried to repeat the familiar lines once more. "Yes! their last look," he whispered; but there his tongue faltered, he became unconscious, and about seven o'clock in the evening his brave spirit passed away (July 4th). He had died at the age of thirty-six, in the early prime of life. Bishop Gambold gently closed his eyes. His body was laid to rest in the "Sharon's Garden," the Brethren's burial-ground at Chelsea. Eight hundred people attended his funeral. Among these were many gentlemen of note and many eminent Methodist preachers.

APPENDIX.

I. CENNICK'S HYMNS.

Of Cennick's hymns the best known are the following: Children of the heavenly King; Jesus, my all to heaven is gone; I love the Lord who died for me; Ere I sleep, for every favour. Forty-four of his hymns are found in the Moravian hymn book: Nos. 67, 73, 79, 90, 119, 168, 296, 305, 393, 421, 462, 487, 502, 537 except verse four, 574, 624, 657, 661, 846, 944, 955, 962, 1025, 1028, 1047, 1050, 1052, 1060, 1061, 1065, 1105, 1124, 1164, 1169, 1187, 1189, 1200, 1204, 1212, 1214, 1243, 1254, 1255, 1278. Among these are the familiar "graces" sung in Sunday Schools all over the country, "Be present at our table, Lord"; and "We thank Thee, Lord, for this our food."

The two following, not in the Moravian collection, may conveniently be given here:

THE PRIESTHOOD OF CHRIST.

A good High Priest is come,
Supplying Aaron's place,
And taking up his room,
Dispensing life and grace;
The law by Aaron's priesthood came,
But grace and truth by Jesus' name.

He once temptation knew,
Trials of every kind,
That He might succour shew
To every tempted mind;
In every point the Lamb was tried
Like us, and then for us He died.

He died, but lives again,
And by the altar stands;
There shows how He was slain,
Opening His pierced hands:
Our Priest abides and pleads the cause
Of us, who have transgressed His laws.

I other priests disclaim,
And laws and offerings too;
None but the bleeding Lamb,
The mighty work can do:
He shall have all the praise, for He
Hath loved and lived, and died for me.

THE SYROPHENICIAN WOMAN.

To Sidon's coasts when Jesus came,
A woman, who had heard His fame,
Thus prayed, O Son of David, hear,
Have mercy, O receive my prayer.

Vouchsafe to grant me my request,
The devil hath my child possessed:
Unheeded seemed her cry, the Lord
Passed on and answered not a word.

Send her away, His followers said;
When meekly turning round His head,
He answered, "Woman, I am come
To call the lost of Israel home."

Then at His feet she bowèd low,
Determined not to let Him go,
"Help me", she cried, again He said,
"Dogs may not have the children's bread."

"'Tis true," she said, "yet they receive
The crumbs that full-fed children leave";
"Faith's prayer shall never be denied,
Thy child I heal," the Lord replied.

She staggered not through unbelief,
But ceased her cries, her tears, her grief,
And in that hour, as spake the Lord,
She found her daughter was restored.

Shall my petitions be in vain?
No longer, gracious Lord, refrain;
O Jesus, speak, O heal my soul!
Speak only, and I shall be whole.

II. CENNICK'S CREED.

At the close of a sermon preached in Dublin, where Arian views were rife, Cennick made the following confession of Faith:

> I believe that Jesus Christ, who was born in Bethlehem of the Virgin Mary, who suffered under Pontius Pilate without the gates of Jerusalem, is verily, truly and eternally God, the same person all the scriptures mention and speak of, and whom all true believers in all ages have known and worshipped.
>
> I believe that God, the whole Godhead by Him, made heaven and earth, and all the worlds, things visible and invisible; that He made me, body and soul, and saw me from His throne in my sinful state, and loved and pitied me, and in due time was a man for my sake; and by His obedience and meritorious life and death has now fully atoned for all my misdeeds and sins, and made me thereby just in the sight of God, and the whole blessed Trinity.
>
> I believe this Jesus Christ is my God, my Lord, my righteousness, my holiness, my redemption, the only wisdom which can do me good, my Saviour in time and in eternity, and I will hereon venture my body and soul for ever and ever.
>
> I believe also and confess, that though I have been unworthy of His mercy, and no more deserved His favour, yet, out of His free grace, His Holy Spirit has awakened and called me out of my sins, and made me to be concerned about my eternal state, and athirst for mercy and righteousness; that then it pleased the Son of God, my Saviour, to reveal His love in my heart, and

to manifest Himself to me, so that now I know I am His and He is mine. He loves me, and I Him; and whether I live or die I am His, who hath both lived and died, and rose and revived, that He might be the Lord both of the dead and of the living.

I believe when I depart out of this world, I shall go to Him in peace, and when my pilgrimage and warfare is ended, I shall find a rest with Him upon His throne; and, without tasting death, His angels shall carry me to His bosom, and I shall enter by the gates into the Paradise of God and follow Him upon Mount Zion with the church of the first-born, and with the spirits of just men made perfect, with whom I shall sit down in white raiment in the temple of God and go no more out.

I believe that a day shall come when all people shall see the same Jesus that was crucified coming in the clouds; and then every tongue shall confess His divinity and every knee bow before Him, who then shall appear in His Father's glory, with all His saints and angels, and shall Himself judge the world in righteousness, and save whom He will. In that day it shall be out of doubt who the Son of Man is, for heaven and earth shall know He is the only Potentate, the God of gods, and Lord of lords, and all those that would not have Him to reign over them shall flee before Him. Then I believe He will confess me and not be ashamed of me, and on this I depend with all my heart. To Him, with His Father, and my Father, and to the Holy Ghost, one God, blessed for ever, be salvation and praise, henceforth world without end.

III. CENNICK'S PRAYER.

O Thou loving and merciful Saviour, who out of mere pity to the children of men, once left Thy everlasting throne and glory, and wast made man for the sake of dying for them, and rescuing them out of their low estate, be pleased still to be gracious in the same way, and abide the Friend of Sinners. Take me to be Thy child; and behold me at Thy feet like Mary begging for mercy and forgiveness, nor send me empty away for Thy name's sake. I am a poor sinner who owes Thee much, for I have failed and sinned in all I have done ever since I was born; I have no righteousness to plead, but, as a guilty criminal before the bar, so stand I before the Judge of all the earth, Whose eyes have tried and found me deserving eternal death. I have no excuse; I have been disobedient and careless; I have defiled my body and soul, and am ashamed to lift up my head. Lord, I have nothing to pay! Oh, freely forgive me all, and I will love Thee much for ever and ever. Let those sharp and bitter pains of Thine ease my heart, which else will be uneasy day and night. Let Thy wounds heal the most diseased soul that ever prayed to Thee, and let the blood and water which flowed out of Thy crucified body wash me and make me clean. Say to me, "Thy sins are forgiven thee," and let Thy Holy Spirit, whom Thou hast promised as the Comforter, assure my heart that all my sins are pardoned for ever and ever, and shall no more come into Thy remembrance. Forgive me that I have been so careless hitherto of Thy salvation, and have so contented myself, without God, in the world; forgive my indifference about my part in Thee, and my coldness to Thy sufferings and merits. Oh, have mercy upon me, and

let me go comforted and in Thy peace to the grave. Be with me when my strength fails me, and lay Thy everlasting arms under my head. When I am departing this life, be then nearer than ever, and let my latter end be better than the beginning. O do this, my dear Saviour, my Lord God and Redeemer, that I may bless Thee and love Thee eternally. Amen.

THE END.

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